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Oil well that ends well.

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What a surprise, the Iraqi government is planning to lease its oil fields to international oil companies.

In the run up to the war, the powers that be were at pains to deny that oil had anything to do with the invasion. Far from them such an idea, they were invading Iraq to defend America from Saddam and to make the world a safer place (democracy in Iraq was later tacked on when the masses saw through the first rationales).

Of course the war was not just about oil. It was to do with creating a US client state in the heart of the Middle East and showing the world who is the daddy (and the daddy's poodle). American access to Iraqi oil was part of the equation, but not the sole factor. But it was a factor and now it is becoming a reality with eleven oil fields in southern Iraq soon to be tendered to international investors, according to the Iraqi oil ministry. These fields are capable of boosting the country's production to three million barrels a day.

The Ministry's spokesperson was at pains to say that the government had no intention of privatising the oil sector. Why should it?

By tendering the fields, foreign multinationals can reap the profits while the Iraqi people can pay for the costs — just as the neo-liberal order likes it.